

Illinois Conference United Church of Christ

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE FOR AN INTERIM SEARCH

Church name:

St. Peter's United Church of Christ

Street address:

905 S. Russell St
Champaign, IL 61821

Association: Eastern

Website: www.stpetersucc.com

Position: Three Quarter-time Interim Minister

Summary Ministry Description:

St. Peter's is a small congregation seeking dynamic leadership to match a desire for dynamic worship, meaningful service, and joyous care for our planet. We provide outreach into our community through an assisted living ministry as well as other partner programs and desire to grow the use of building campus, build educational programs, and build on health and wellness-based objectives.

Photographs:

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church and its people.





*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

1. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your Interim co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

- Encouraging organization and growth of programs
- Participation and excitement for outreach and education
- Identifying focus areas for the congregation
- Building energy and excitement for inviting friends/family
- Updating the strategic plan and ensuring focus of the congregation in a multi-year vision

Core Competencies:

(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your Interim's relationship with the church.)

- Dealing with conflict
- Establishing vision and working toward that change
- Pastoral care and grief management

2. SUPPORT AND COMPENSATION

What is the expected living situation for your Interim (*e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed*)?

Housing allowance. While St. Peter's does have a parsonage, it is currently rented.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your Interim.

We're flexible and in the past have had interim ministers who lived in nearby towns <1 hour away and who would be on-site for several days then at home for several days with other local ministers covering for emergencies. We can see a similar arrangement here if needed, though ideally it would be great to have a minister who was local to the Champaign-Urbana community.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:

It is our understanding that there are local ecumenical ministerial alliance groups the minister may become involved with which provide additional peer support, as well as those

within the Eastern Association of the Illinois conference including our conference minister and those upstream from her.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

We're open to a variety of office hour arrangements which allow for the minister to coordinate supervisory responsibilities with staff, prepare for Sunday worship, provide routine pastoral care, and otherwise prep and handle professional needs that may happen in our community. We are happy to enable the minister to do the work Christ sets forth where it needs to be done.

Salary Basis:

St. Peter's typically works with the candidate to apply the current formulas for ministerial compensation set by the UCC which include categories of:

- Cash salary*
- Housing Allowance*
- Reimbursement for health/dental benefits arranged by the minister through the association, marketplace, spouse, or other body*
- Retirement matching contributions*

3. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps?

St. Peter's has embraced its vision of providing for more joyous care of the Earth in 2023/2024 as we embarked upon a capital improvement program for installation of a solar array on our grounds and geothermal loop and heat pump system to provide climate control in significant spaces in our building. This is a financial challenge and risk for a congregation of our size, but something we feel compelled to do to continue to build our campus and make it attractive for ongoing use.

Our congregation, like many, has shrunk considerably over the past 50 years. This past year we've been restructuring some of our organization to help make ongoing programs more manageable. This includes consolidation of committees as well as being willing to set aside some prior ministries that aren't viable at the present time -- knowing we may yet pick those back up when the time is right. This process of re-organization continues now with our gap minister's assistance so we can better identify who has what responsibilities within the congregation and ensure that the important work of our church continues. We know that as a small congregation we need to have enthusiasm within our programs so that others will want to join us in achieving success.

4. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- Lots of institutional knowledge and experience
- Willingness to try new things (worship and otherwise)
- Detail oriented
- Assets available to try something new and be creative.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around? What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?

Most worship takes place in our main sanctuary. It is bookmarked by a prelude and postlude on the organ or piano. We typically have 2 choir pieces and sometimes other special music, including ~monthly performances by our handbell choir. Several members are musicians who will bring in an instrument and accompany the choir or organist periodically. The sermon is 10-15 minutes of reflection on the Old and New Testament passages read and usually contains relevant personal commentary/anecdotes as well as educational background on the content of the passages and the message the writers were intending. Good preaching is engaging, personal, educational, and leaves you realizing you can still learn new things about this text. We prepare and serve communion monthly at present.

From time to time, we also use our chapel for more intimate services. About once a year we'll do an outdoor based worship, or we might use our fellowship hall to do worship around the tables.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?
- Provide the Interim with a copy of updated bylaws, policies and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?

St. Peter's organizes work into committees. The Consistory is the governing body of the membership. The minister is an ex-officio member of all committees and attends where appropriate. We are in the process of consolidating our committee work into: Church and Ministry (HR), Financial, Mission Outreach Revitalization and Education, Building and Grounds, Records Management, and Worship. This is a work in progress. Ad-hoc committees, folks running projects/programs, and working groups spring up and are expected to work within the framework of those main 6 committees who each have a representative from the Consistory. If things go well, then the minister may attend up to those 6 committee meetings plus the Consistory meeting and any necessary staff meetings.

We've experienced some challenges in the past with not having a good flow of communication from Consistory through all committees and back. This new structure is our attempt to remedy that along with ensure clarity in responsibilities. We continue to struggle with teams or individuals who feel burned out or overwhelmed.

Generally, in a crisis or in a need for immediate attention to an issue the exec team (officers) of the Consistory can meet via email, phone, or online meeting to discuss the issue and work toward resolution. If necessary, we'd then call a full meeting of the Consistory or even the congregation.

5. CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP & BUDGET

Current Membership: 68 active, 16
inactive

Membership 5 years ago:

Average Weekly Worship Attendance: 35

Participating in Weekly Adult Education: 0

Participating in Youth Ministries: ___ 0 ___

Current Year Annual Church Budget: \$___\$485k (note \$130k special project 2024) ___

Current Year Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM): \$___\$21k___

Pledging Units: ___25-33___ Average Annual Pledge Amount: \$_4017___

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0

Reason for this debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current?

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

We're currently wrapping up the installation of geothermal heat pump system and solar power generation array. The project is expected to be wrapped up in January/February 2024 with final billing the Q1. This project has a total expected spend of \$511k with the following payment sources through 2036:

- *Federal Energy Credits: \$146k*
- *Solar Renewable Energy Credits: \$54k*
- *Other Grants and Rebates: ~\$20k*
- *Designated Giving: \$88.7k*
- *Memorial Giving: \$15k*
- *Capital Campaign: \$40k*
- *Energy Savings: \$150k*

A construction loan is being taken from Cornerstone UCC to cover initial costs. Additional monies are being borrowed from our internal assets including our endowment and memorial funds.

Does your church have a parsonage?

Street / City / State / Zip: 1003 S. Russell St; Champaign

Finished square footage: 1800 + unfinished basement

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: 3 / 2

Available for minister residence: Y/N - No

Expected minister residence: Y/N - No

Condition of structure, systems and appliances - ok

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs – *building and grounds committee and the Consistory.*

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The main church building is at 905 S. Russell and the parsonage at 1003 S. Russell. The church also owns two pieces of farmland for a total of 140 acres which are managed by a farm management agency.

Our church is a two story masonry building with a main floor sanctuary seating 250 and separate balcony seating 50. Brides room with 1/2 bath; 2 meeting rooms; 2 offices; hospitality/library room; nursery on main floor. Lower level – Fellowship Hall with stage; large kitchen. Also 5 classrooms; 2 offices; storage room and boiler room. Separate maintenance shed approximately 1500 square feet.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*)

Our space is handicapped accessible. We have electronic door entry to the main sanctuary as well as the fellowship hall downstairs. We have zero step entry to both of those spaces. There's an elevator available to use between floors. There are wheelchair specific spaces in the sanctuary to allow someone to park out of the aisle. Our sanctuary has steps that go up to the pulpit and would need to be adjusted to accommodate a wheelchair.

6. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation in the past 10 years.

Every church has conflicts, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

- Rev. Deborah Owen’s cancer led to retirement and her passing this past fall very quickly. There are a great many emotions that continue to surround this dramatic loss for our congregation. Our leadership responded with care to Rev. Owens needs throughout her treatment and ultimate retiring. We enjoyed celebrating her retirement with her with a drive-through activity where the community could greet and love her. We had an impromptu remembrance for her during worship, and a subsequent larger service involving the community. Her loss and impact have marked us and will continue to do so for some time.
- Rev. Little’s departure prior to Rev. Owen was rapid and due to deterioration in the relationship between Rev. Little and the congregation. This conflict required involvement the association minister, at the time Tom Norwalk, and our leadership (Consistory). We worked through the termination process with those persons, arranged for appropriate compensation structure, and communicated clearly with several persons in the room at all times. Ultimately that relationship was broken and we were able to then begin the search process again.
- Staff conflicts in particular with the office manager in 2022/2023. In this situation we went for a time where our HR/Church and Ministry committee wasn’t functioning and we only had a few people doing hiring as-needed. The office manager and several others had questions about the role they play in the church and how they’re compensated contractually. This generated a lot of heat and desire for change. We brought the C&M committee back into operation and fleshed out staffing policies as well as communicated those clearly to staff ensuring they understood differences between contractual employees and payroll employees and establishing a clearer reporting structure that had advocacy for the staff members within the C&M committee as well as from their supervisor. This has been bumpy, and re-classifying some employees who were previously classed as contractors has been tricky, but it’s been allowing us to create a clearer picture for our team.

Ministerial History *(include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)*

Pastor’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Bill Lawser (Gap)	Fall 2023- Spring 2024	Y
Deborah Owen	2017-2023	Y
Jennifer D. Little	2014-2016	Y

Laurie Hill	2008-2013	Y
Betty Hornback (interim)	2007-2008	Y
Glenn Trost	1996-2006	Y
Glenn Kalkbrenner	1989-1995	Y
Rich Freeman	1980-1987	Y

7. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

For example, which community outreach activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church's engagement with neighbors near or far?

Our largest outreach is Rev. Mark Jacobs' outreach ministry to several assisted living communities in the area where he provides worship and communion services for members and non-members living in those spaces. We also provide space for and service to Food and More, a local food pantry that is run in cooperation with several congregations.

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

St. Peter's has most recently been involved in the TPIRC ministries and routinely sends people to association/conference meetings including the national Synod UCC gathering in Indianapolis in 2023.

8. REFERENCES

Please provide one reference letter from someone in your community. Make sure the person is not a member of your church but is a person who knows your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Please attach the letter to this document.

REFERENCE

Name / Position / Setting

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.

Anything else you wish to share.

I was asked to write a brief description of St. Peter's UCC from the perspective of someone outside the congregation. I am happy to do that, with the understanding that no outsider and few insiders can really describe a congregation adequately. However, what I have learned about St. Peter's during 10 years of growing our relationship has impressed me very much, and I would like to share what I have learned.

I know St. Peter's through connections with previous pastors, and through their "Green Team" - a group of parishioners active in Creation Care and environmental justice initiatives. The interfaith group I work with, Faith in Place, partners with groups like this in diverse houses of worship to empower them to build healthier communities. Here are my impressions of this congregation:

The church is not the building. But my first work with them was a tour through the building to do an energy audit. It is a beautiful and well-maintained place, which was obviously built in and for a time when worship attendance was at record levels in America. When St. Peter's was building, churches served as community centers in neighborhoods across income levels. St. Peter's, like most churches, is not as large as it was in the past. What struck me were the questions church leaders were asking about how they could make changes to serve the changing community in new and relevant ways. They were not thinking about the potlucks of the past, but were asking themselves how to outfit their kitchen, their storage, their grounds, their meeting rooms as resources to serve their community now.

In talking with them about things like energy use and garden stewardship, it became clear that there were some real differences in opinion among church members, and not just about building and property. Though there were disagreements, there was no drama. In potential conflict areas of church life, I learned, people who caused drama, (especially by claiming sole ownership of the moral "high ground") were shown the door, and people who knew how to work together and figure out win-win situations were brought in. Dramatic flair is not appreciated as much as problem solving ability. And they get things done.

The biggest thing I have seen them get done is a large clean energy project. They have installed geo-thermal for heating and cooling and are now installing solar to power the church building. This makes them national leaders among houses of worship addressing climate pollution through building retrofits. It is a project that required big dreams, lots of discussion, lots of hope for the future and lots of faith that the leadership of their congregation makes a healthy difference for their community. Those projects are complex and must be done on many levels of the congregation. I saw healthy communication practiced repeatedly. I saw creativity and

compromise working hand in hand. I saw older and long-established members working together with younger and newer members. Honestly, it is an inspiring accomplishment.

This big project did not eat up all the congregation's energy or attention. They continued to attend to worship excellence, community outreach, and care for each other. They cared especially well for their pastor and my friend, Rev. Deborah Owens, who was stricken with cancer and died after a shockingly short illness. How congregations treat their pastors is important, and St. Peter's treated her with dignity, respect, and compassion in sickness and in health.

My hope and prayer is that their pastoral search will proceed as smoothly as possible, and that the congregation will continue their efforts to build a healthy community for decades to come.

*Sincerely,
The Rev. Cindy Shepherd
Green Team Director, Faith in Place
Cindy@faithinplace.org*

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment: **YES**

Signature: *Rev. Shernell J. Edney Stilley*

Name / Title: Rev. Shernell Edney Stilley, ACM for Pastoral Transitions

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Date: February 06, 2024